

cigarettes or traditional cigarettes, the same guardrails are in place.

But there are two different sets of rules when it comes to online purchases. For traditional cigarettes, the buyer has to sign and show an ID at the time of delivery, just the same as they would have to do for in-person purchases. But e-cigarettes are operating on a different playing field. Anyone, no matter how old or young, can go online and buy e-cigarettes and have them delivered to their front door, no questions asked—no age verification is required, no ID, no nothing.

These devices, we know, are just as addictive and dangerous as traditional cigarettes and should be subject to the same restrictions. That is why the Senate passed legislation that Senator FEINSTEIN from California and I introduced called the Preventing Online Sales of E-Cigarettes to Children Act. This legislation would put in place the same safeguards for e-cigarettes as traditional cigarettes purchased online. It is not to change the law; it is just to make sure we enforce the existing law. It would require online retailers to verify the age of the customer and release deliveries only to adults with an ID. Again, it simply applies the same safeguards already in place for online purchases of regular cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to e-cigarettes.

These are commonsense, straightforward reforms, and that is why our legislation in the Senate passed unanimously this summer.

It includes an amendment offered by our colleague from Kentucky, Senator PAUL, which requires the National Institutes of Health to conduct a study on the short- and long-term health impact of e-cigarettes on those under 21.

When we talk about passing consensus legislation, this is about as simple and straightforward as they come, and there could not be a more important time to take action. If we are going to turn the tide on e-cigarettes and prevent more young people from facing the deadly health consequences, this is an important and necessary step. This bipartisan bill would keep e-cigarettes out of the hands of our children, and I hope our House Democratic colleagues will pass this critical legislation without additional delay.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, it is timely that I should be giving my "Time to Wake Up" speech with the distinguished Senator from Louisiana presiding because I am going to be talking about sea level rise, and seeing him in the chair reminds me of a recent report on what sea level rise is doing to the great State of Louisiana, "the sportsman's paradise," in which a scientist from Tulane University—a Tulane University geologist—was asked about the report about what the State had to look forward to from sea level rise, and he said: "What it says is

we're screwed." NOLA, the news website in New Orleans, in Louisiana, ran that headline. So I know the Senator is sympathetic to it.

But today, all eyes are on Georgia, which for the first time in generations voted for a Democratic Presidential candidate, and the two Senate races are headed for runoff elections, which will decide the balance of power in this body.

Georgians of every race and background turned out to reject the politics of fear and division that came from the White House for the last 4 years and to reject the disdain for facts and science that has cost Americans so much in battles like COVID and climate change.

Perhaps buried in the election outcome in Georgia was Georgia's knowing the threat of climate change. For people along Georgia's coast, climate change is no Chinese hoax; it is a clear and present danger.

In the spring of 2014, I took a climate trip along the coast of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. I met with scientists and students, outdoorsmen, faith leaders, and State and local officials, who cherish their coastal communities, as Louisianans do and as Rhode Islanders do. They saw the seas rising and acidifying due to carbon pollution. Georgians told me how deeply they care about their coast. That caring has powered them through some tough battles. They fought hard against fossil fuel development off Georgia's shores, and they won.

It is not hard to understand why Georgians fight for their coasts against fossil fuel pollution. Near Savannah, I visited Fort Pulaski and Tybee Island. NOAA has a tide gauge at Fort Pulaski. It has been measuring sea level since 1935. The tide gauge takes straightforward measurements—clear, irrefutable facts. That tide gauge showed sea levels up over 8 inches since it was installed. For low-lying areas, those 8 inches of sea level rise are a problem already, but it is going to get worse.

Climate change worsens coastal flooding in two ways. First, it raises the level of the sea as glaciers and ice sheets melt into the sea and as warmer oceans expand. Second, climate change powers up stronger and more frequent hurricanes, which send those higher seas as higher storm surges farther inland. So it is important to look at how far and how often sea level rise and storm surges will flood coastal areas.

This is the map of Georgia's coastal area around Savannah. Here is Savannah. Here is the coastline. Here is the ocean. Here is Tybee Island. This dot here is Fort Pulaski, where the tide gauge is. That is what it looks like now, but "now" is not going to stay because here is what Georgia has coming at it.

Based on NOAA information, this is the risk of flooding along the Georgia coast. It takes NOAA's intermediate prediction of sea level rise—"inter-

mediate" meaning it is not the most extreme scenario; it is the midrange prediction—and it shows the risk in any year of a 4-foot-deep flood.

So here we are in 2020, and the risk is negligible. It is about 3 percent, meaning in present circumstances, you get a 4-foot flood through that area every 33 years. But by 2040, the risk is over 40 percent, which means that a 4-foot flood in that area is now not happening every 33 years, it is happening virtually every other year. By 2060, you hit 100 percent. You are getting a 4-foot flood in coastal Georgia every year. Of course this tops out at one flood per year based on the percentages, but if you look at this trajectory, clearly we are headed for multiple 4-foot floods per year in the outyears.

When I was on Tybee Island, I met city councilman Paul Wolff, who showed me the city of Tybee's new stormwater tide gate, which they just installed to protect the island from sea level rise. He explained that the road out to Tybee Island, which is here, running along that edge, flooded already 45 times per year with just 1 foot of sea level rise.

The city had already put in place a short-term plan for 14 to 20 inches of sea level rise by 2060. They were already thinking what the community would need to do as seas rise and acting on the best science back at that time. But now consider this: Consider sea level rise and storm surges combining to produce a 4-foot flood every year, at least once a year.

Here is what that map looks like when you put 4 feet of water there. This is the Savannah area, and here is Tybee Island. This is all land in gray, and now all of this is underwater. Tybee Island has turned into just a tiny little atoll, basically, out in the ocean. The road that I was talking about is now not just occasionally washed over with water; for 5 miles, that road is underwater.

Now, 4 feet of flooding happening every year is obviously bad, but remember, that wasn't the worst-case scenario; that was the intermediate NOAA scenario.

Here is an extreme case—10 feet of sea level rise. That was Tybee Island. There is nothing left. Do you want an island now? Your island is Savannah—Savannah Island, surrounded by water.

Well before the physical disaster of sea level rise and storm surge and flooding happens, something else comes first: an economic disaster, because we are not the only people looking at these projections of 4 feet and 10 feet of flooding. So do insurance companies. So do banks selling mortgages.

In these populated areas that are now land, how do you insure against a 4-foot flood that will happen every year? You can't buy a flood insurance policy for an event that happens every year. How do you get a 30-year mortgage for a property that will have flooded at least 30 times by the end of the mortgage? That economic punch—when you

can't get insurance and when you can't get a mortgage on the property, that punch lands long before the floods come.

Take Chatham County and Glynn County. According to a report by Climate Central, over \$2 billion in property value would be lost in those two counties with 3 feet of sea level rise. Up the flooding to 8 feet, and it is over \$7 billion in property value destroyed—people's homes, people's businesses. When a buyer can't get insurance and when a buyer can't get a mortgage, sellers face plummeting property values. The market unbalances rapidly because all of a sudden, you don't have many eligible buyers. The only buyers you have are people who can afford the property without having to borrow and who can afford to take the hit of an annual flood without insurance. That is not a big crowd. So the bottom falls out of the coastal property market.

That collapse in the coastal property market is what financial experts call a systemic risk. "Systemic risk" is the mildest and blandest term for a catastrophe that I know. It means that the whole economy is threatened by the economic collapse of coastal property values.

It is not just me saying it. In 2016, the top economists for U.S. mortgage giant Freddie Mac projected that climate-driven flooding along U.S. coasts will cause a property value collapse, leading to economy-wide losses "greater . . . than those experienced in the housing crisis and the Great Recession."

For those of us who remember 2008 and the pain and the difficulty and the harm and the fear that was caused by that mortgage meltdown—greater than that, is what Freddie Mac says. That is not an environmental group, by the way; that is Freddie Mac.

It has already begun. Lenders are already requiring bigger and bigger downpayments in coastal areas, sometimes as much as 40 percent of a home's value before they will insure the remainder. Flood insurance premiums continue to rise, and coverage limits leave many seaside property owners exposed to huge losses.

The people who own this flooded property are going to want to know why Congress paid more attention to fossil fuel polluters than we paid to coastal property owners; why we would only listen to the people causing this problem and not listen to the innocent property owners who are going to suffer billions and, if you multiply it out, trillions of dollars in losses.

When I was in Georgia in 2014, a local clammer named Charlie Phillips took me out over the marshes on his airboat. It was a boat he built himself. He is a member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which runs the regional fishery, so Charlie knows his stuff. He has been an outdoorsman his whole life, and he needs fresh, clean water for his Georgia clams. Charlie told me that changes in

the climate are hurting the ecosystem that supports his and his employees' livelihoods. Six years ago, Charlie was worried about a perilous future, one that looks even more perilous now and one to which we have not responded for 6 long years.

Well, one hopeful change is that we have a President-elect now—a President-elect who understands what is happening to our climate and who understands what is happening to our coastal communities. He is from Delaware. He gets it. The question is, How will Congress respond? Will Republicans allow a strong, comprehensive climate bill? So far, there is no sign of that, not in this building.

At some point, we will—mark my words—we will finally cast off the grim and malign grip of the fossil fuel polluters and their massive political influence machines. At some point, we will finally listen to the people now on dry land whose homes and businesses are going to be predictably flooded out because we did nothing. I will tell you that it had better be soon because time is not on our side. As these coasts flood—not just the Georgia coast but the New Jersey coast, the Rhode Island coast—as these coasts flood, coastal property owners will demand answers, and the Georgia voters who live near the Georgia coast are entitled to an explanation of why nothing is being done. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, in my neighborhood and my community, you can walk down the street and visit with some really great neighbors—Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus. They all live in the same neighborhood and are friends.

My kids are grown now. We watched all our kids playing together in the community and in the neighborhood. We can see just from this one community and just from this one neighborhood this beautiful thing our Founding Fathers dreamed of—the right of every individual to be able to choose a faith of their own decision, to be able to live that faith out, to be able to change that faith if they choose to, or to be able to have no faith at all.

There are plenty of people in my neighborhood that I have no idea what faith they have. They don't have to post it. They don't have to print it. They don't have to say it because they are an American. They don't have to be a certain faith or be able to maintain that faith.

The Declaration of Independence makes known that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our Constitution protects our right to a free press, to speak, to assemble, to petition the government, and to have any faith we choose and to be able to live that faith without fear that the government is going to impose a faith on them.

Our founding government documents explicitly state these rights. We know that, inherently, these rights should be for all people. As such, I believe it is the responsibility of every American not just to cherish the freedoms that we have but to also be able to state those freedoms worldwide and to be able to encourage people worldwide to also live those basic human rights and dignities.

The Trump administration is heavily focused on sharing these ideals with the world. In fact, right now, Poland is hosting the Third Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief Alliance. The United States has hosted the first two of those. In fact, I was a participant in the second one, and I was a participant online with the third one that was just in process.

It was implemented with the help of Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback. It brought people of all faiths and of all countries together who choose to discuss religious liberty.

This year's ministerial definitely looks very different based on COVID worldwide and its restrictions, but it is remarkable to see Foreign Ministers from all over the world, many from countries that don't practice religious liberty, in the middle of a conversation about religious liberty.

Eighty percent of the world's population live where religious freedom is threatened or denied, which puts an extra obligation on those of us who live in freedom to be able to display that freedom to people worldwide. We should condemn religious persecution and work to ensure that all people have the freedom of faith, to live their faith, to change their faith, or to have no faith at all.

In addition to the ministerial, I am really encouraged by the growing support of the International Freedom Alliance, which has a membership now of 32 countries. They are dedicated to advancing this basic right of religious freedoms. Not only are we seeing countries gathering in this ministerial to discuss religious liberty, many from countries that don't allow religious liberty, but we now have 32 countries that are dedicating together to say: We do practice religious liberty in our country, and we want to spread that.

The alliance of these 32 countries, which we are a part of, has two core functions; the first of which is to enhance global advocacy to protect the right of freedom of religion or belief for all and to hold all accountable to those who violate that freedom of religion or belief; and the second thing is to serve as a platform to better coordinate the efforts of governments, parliamentarians, and civil societies to advance this right.

I hope this alliance continues to grow and continues to have gaining influence on the world's stage. I hope they continue to condemn bad actors who facilitate or condone discrimination